

CLAIMS:

1. A method for the treatment or prophylaxis breast cancer in a mammal, said method comprising administering to said mammal an effective amount of one or more cytokines or functional derivatives or agonists of said one or more cytokines for a time and under conditions sufficient to ameliorate the effects of or to delay onset of said cancer.
2. A method according to claim 1 wherein the cytokines are selected from the list consisting of oncostatin M (OSM), interleukin-6 (IL-6), interleukin-11 (IL-11), leukaemia inhibitory factor (LIF) and epidermal growth factor (EGF) or other members of the EGF family.
3. A method according to claim 1 wherein the cytokine is OSM.
4. A method according to claim 1 wherein the cytokine is LIF.
5. A method according to claim 2 or 3 or 4 wherein the cytokine is of human or murine origin.
6. A method according to claim 1 or 2 wherein the breast cancer is metastatic breast cancer.
7. A method according to claim 1 or 2 wherein the breast cancer is early breast cancer.
8. A method according to any one of the preceding claims further comprising the simultaneous or sequential administration of at least one other therapeutic agent.
9. A method according to claim 8 wherein the other therapeutic agent is a chemotherapeutic agent or a hormone.
10. A method according to claim 9 wherein the chemotherapeutic agent is selected from cyclophosphamide, vincristine, methotrexate, cisplatin, melphalan and adriamycin.

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11. A method according to claim 9 wherein the hormone is tamoxifen or other anti-estrogens.
12. A method according to claim 1 wherein the cytokine is administered in an amount from about 0.5 μ g to about 2 mg per kilogram of body weight of mammal.
13. A method according to claim 1 wherein the mammal is a human.
14. A pharmaceutical composition effective in ameliorating the effects of breast cancer or delaying onset of breast cancer in a mammal comprising at least one cytokine or a functional derivative or agonist thereof and one or more pharmaceutically acceptable carriers and/or diluents.
15. A pharmaceutical composition according to claim 14 comprising a cytokine selected from IL-6, OSM, IL-11, LIF and EGF or other members of the EGF family.
16. A pharmaceutical composition according to claim 14 where the cytokine is OSM.
17. A pharmaceutical composition according to claim 14 wherein the cytokine is LIF.
18. A pharmaceutical composition according to claim 14 or 15 or 16 further comprising a chemotherapeutic agent or a hormone.
19. A pharmaceutical composition according to claim 18 wherein the chemotherapeutic agent is selected from cyclophosphamide, vincristine, methotrexate, cisplatin, melphalan and adriamycin.
20. A pharmaceutical composition according to claim 18 wherein the hormone is tamoxifen or other anti-estrogens.
21. Use of a cytokine or a functional derivative or agonist thereof in the manufacture of a medicament for the treatment or prophylaxis of breast cancer in a mammal.

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22. Use according to claim 21 wherein the cytokine is IL-6, OSM, EGF, IL-11 or LIF.
23. Use according to claim 22 where the cytokine is OSM.
24. Use according to claim 22 wherein the cytokine is LIF.
25. Use according to claim 22 wherein the mammal is a human.
26. An agent comprising a cytokine or a functional derivative or agonist thereof for the treatment or prophylaxis of breast cancer in a mammal.
27. An agent according to claim 26 wherein the cytokine is IL-6, OSM, IL-11, LIF or EGF or other members of the EGF family.
28. An agent according to claim 26 wherein the cytokine is OSM
29. An agent according to claim 26 wherein the cytokine is LIF.

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